

ECOTOURISM AS A CONSERVATION TOOL: A CASE OF AFADJATO–AGUMATSA CONSERVATION AREA, GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Nature tourism is being increasingly promoted as a means to combat the inequality and dependency in rural areas. Furthermore, ecotourism as a subset of nature tourism has emerged as a potential mechanism for involving rural communities in the management of their natural resources, and thus benefit from their conservation efforts. This paper presents the results of a study undertaken within three traditional areas around the Mt. Afadjato and Agumatsa Range in Ghana. I examined local peoples' perceptions on whether the costs of conservation can be offset with the potential benefits of the biodiversity of the area. Local people in all traditional areas see ecotourism as an opportunity to develop the area than as a conservation tool. However, the status of biodiversity, and the range of potential opportunities and costs, suggest that local people could benefit more from conservation and ecotourism, if they are prepared to bear the costs. Equally, this will only be possible with the adoption of a holistic strategy that embraces the conservation of the whole of the Mt. Afadjato and Agumatsa Range, rather than the piecemeal approach currently being promoted by different traditional areas. Furthermore, since poverty in diverse forms is considered as one of the major threats to sustaining biodiversity, benefits from ecotourism must be appropriately targeted so that local people benefit and understand that these benefits are linked to the conservation of natural resources of the Afadjato-Agumatsa Conservation Area.

Keywords: *Afadjato, Agumatsa Range, benefits, conservation, ecotourism, local communities*

INTRODUCTION

Alternative forms of tourism such as nature tourism are increasingly being promoted in rural areas as a means to combat the trends in inequality and dependency (Broham, 1996; Goodwin, 1996). Ecotourism has emerged as a potential mechanism for involving rural communities in

the management of natural heritage such as protected areas. However, the positive intent of tourism, and for that matter, ecotourism activities in rural communities have not yet been fully realised. Instead of providing the substantial benefits that are envisioned, it has led rather to numerous problems (Brandon, 1993). Significant

identifiable problems include environmental degradation, negative impacts on local culture and creation of local economic hardships (Boo, 1990; West and Brechin, 1991; Cellegalas-Lascrain, 1993). These problems have been traced to the absence of political will and commitment of governments to mobilise resources, including active involvement of local people (Bunting *et al.*, 1991; Brandon, 1993), and the fact that tourism is often promoted by large-scale interests from outside the destination. Thus most decisions affecting host communities are driven by the industry in concert with national governments and international NGOs. In other words, local people and their communities have become the objects of development but not the subjects of it (Mitchell and Reid, 2001). Therefore, the active participation of local communities in tourism initiatives the world over, with the view to reverse this trend enjoys a great deal of support.

It is also true that local communities must live with the long-term consequences of tourism development, hence it is important that local communities at the outset develop an understanding of what tourism means as a concept (Wray, 1989). They should also be made aware not only of potential and economic benefits but also of both positive and negative changes that tourism may bring to their lifestyles and social structures (Robinson, 1992). Hence the reasons why local people should actively participate in such projects span moral, economic and environmental objectives (Brandon, 1993). From environmental and economic perspectives, if local people are not involved, it is likely that over time, the resources will be destroyed and the investment will be lost. From a moral perspective, it is preferable that local people manage their own destiny rather than be buffeted by outside forces (Brandon 1993). Active participation of local people in community projects also provides a way of ensuring that greater benefits remain in the communities and that the linkage between incentives and benefits is strong. In addition, it provides communities with the knowledge and

power to exercise increased control over the management and development of the resource.

In this paper I examine the local peoples' perceptions of tourism in their area with regard to potential economic opportunities, benefits and expectations of tourism-based activities in the Afadjato and Agumatsa Conservation Area. The paper examines local peoples' perceptions on whether the costs of conservation can be offset with the potential benefits from ecotourism in relation to the biodiversity of the area.

Site description

Mt. Afadjato and the Agumatsa Range are part of the Akwapim-Togo Range, which constitute the highest hills in Ghana. Mt. Afadjato itself is the highest mountain in Ghana at 890 m above sea level. Agumatsa Range runs in a northeast to southwest direction between the Volta River and the Togo border (Ntiamoah-Baidu *et al.*, 2001). The hills lie within longitude 0° 15'E and 0° 45'E and latitude 6° 45' and 7° 15'N. The Agumatsa Range is a distinct landmass with Wli and Tagbo waterfalls at the northern and southern borders, respectively. The study villages lie at the foot of the Agumatsa Range and include: Gbledi-Gborgame, Gbledi-Chebi, Fodome-Ahor, Wli-Afegame and Wli-Agorviefe. Together, the villages cover an area of ca. 1172 km², within the Hohoe District of Ghana. For the purpose of this study, the whole area is referred to as Afadjato - Agumatsa Conservation Area (AACCA).

METHODS

Data collection and analysis

Individual interviews using semi-structured questionnaires and group discussions were held to collect information on the importance of conservation to the selected communities. Five major villages in the area were surveyed to assess local peoples' perceptions of conservation and what they perceive to be the potential benefits. The villages comprised Gbledi-Gborgame, Gbledi-Chebi, Fodome-Ahor, Wli-Afegame and Wli-Agorviefe all in the Afadjato-Agumatsa Conservation Area project area. Fifty individuals

were interviewed in each of the villages. Group discussions involved bringing together the older people (above age 50) in each of the villages and the groups were asked questions which sought to confirm answers given by individuals in the individual interviews.

Data obtained from questionnaire surveys were analysed using cross tabulations in cases where variables were categorical while variables that were continuous were analysed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). These included present income levels and expected income levels from tourism activities. Logistic regression was used to examine factors that were likely to determine the interaction of local people with tourists.

RESULTS

Local peoples’ perceptions of tourism at Afadjato-Agumatsa Conservation Area

Most respondents (98.4%) living in the five villages agreed that it was good to attract tourists to AACA. The opinion did not differ ($c^2 = 6.16$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$) between villages, nor by sex, age, educational background or income level of respondents.. The major reason (65.1%) perceived for attracting tourists to the area was to develop and project the image of the villages. Other less important reasons included: to enable local people to interact with foreigners; to create markets for locally produced goods; and to provide job opportunities for local people (Table 1). The

reasons given above differed ($c^2 = 29.69$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.01$) between villages, with most people (75.0%) from Ahor perceiving development and projection of image of their village as the major reason for attracting tourists to the AACA (Table 1).

Most respondents (94.0%) also thought that by attracting tourists to the area, local people could earn extra money from tourists to supplement their regular income. This opinion did not differ ($p > 0.05$) between villages, sexes, age categories, educational backgrounds or income levels of respondents. Those who thought they could make money from tourism identified five major activities that could be undertaken to achieve this. These included: selling of food items to tourists; operating rest houses or home stays; tour guiding; charging of entrance fees and entertaining tourists through cultural performances. Most respondents (55.4%) thought they could make extra income by selling food items, especially fruits, to tourists. The opinions held differed ($c^2 = 54.59$ $df = 16$, $p < 0.001$) between villages (Table 2) but there were no differences between the sexes, age categories, educational backgrounds or income levels of respondents (all $p > 0.05$).

Involvement of local people in tourism activities

Most respondents (93.6%) living in the five villages had seen tourists in the preceding month in

Table 1 Reasons perceived by respondents for attracting tourists to AACA

Village	Sample size	To develop and project image of village (%)	To enable local people interact with foreigners (%)	To create market for local goods (%)	To provide job opportunities (%)
Gborgame	46	65.2	28.3	0.0	6.5
Chebi	49	63.3	18.4	12.2	6.1
Ahor	46	75.0	13.0	19.6	2.2
Afegame	49	65.2	6.1	30.6	6.1
Agorviefe	48	57.1	14.6	10.4	0.0
Total	238	65.1	16.0	14.7	4.2

their villages. This differed ($c^2 = 6.96$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$) between villages, as all respondents at Agorviefe had seen tourists in their village, while, tourists had been seen less often in other villages (Table 3).

The possibility of seeing tourists in all the villages was not dependent on the sex, age, educational backgrounds or income levels of individuals. Even though the majority indicated they had seen tourists in the villages, most of them (68.3%) had no direct contact with the tourists who came to their villages. The possibility of individuals coming into contact with tourists differed ($c^2 = 93.38$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$) between the villages, with most (69.4%) people living in Gborgame coming into contact with tourists and most respondents (94.0%) living in Afegame having the least chance of coming into contact with tourists (Table 3). The chances of local people coming into contact with tourists also differed ($c^2 = 5.96$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$) between sexes, with more males (38.1%) coming into contact with tourists than females (Table 4).

The age, educational background or income level of individuals did not affect the possibility of coming into contact or interacting with tourists ($p > 0.05$). Thus, a logistic regression showed that the possibility of people coming into contact or interacting with tourists depended on the village where people lived and their sex. The model explained 84.0% of the variance and predicted that people living in Chebi, Ahor and Afegame were less likely to come into contact with tourists, and that males were also more likely to come into contact with tourists (Table 5).

The major interaction with tourists was in the form of conversation with local people. Other forms of interaction included: selling to tourists and rendering of tour guiding services, with most (53.3%) people from Gborgame involved in tour guiding (Table 6). However, there was no difference in the kind of interaction between tourists and local people between villages, sex, age, educational backgrounds or income levels of respondents ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2: Local peoples' perceptions of how they could make money from tourism in AACA

Village	Sample Size	Selling food (%)	Rest houses or home stays (%)	Tour guiding (%)	Entrance fee (%)	Entertaining tourists (%)
Gborgame	48	43.8	4.2	33.3	12.5	6.3
Chebi	44	72.7	11.4	11.4	4.5	0.0
Ahor	44	63.6	6.8	11.4	15.9	2.3
Afegame	45	53.3	6.8	8.9	35.6	2.2
Agorviefe	50	46.0	2.0	6.0	44.0	2.0
Total	231	55.4	4.8	14.3	22.9	2.6

Table 3: The number of people who had seen tourists in their areas in the month preceding their interview in the five villages of AACA

Village	Sample size	Seen Tourists (%)		Contact with tourists (%)	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Gborgame	49	8.2	91.8	30.6	69.4
Chebi	50	8.0	92.0	92.0	8.0
Ahor	50	12.0	88.0	88.0	12.0
Afegame	50	4.0	96.0	94.0	6.0
Agorviefe	50	0.0	100.0	36.0	64.0
Total	249	6.4	93.6	68.3	31.7

Table 4: Contact between local people in AACA and tourist by gender

Sex	Sample size	No (%)	Yes (%)
Female	110	76.4	23.6
Male	139	61.9	38.1
Total	249	68.3	31.7

Most respondents (97.2%) were interested in having more interaction with tourists. There was no difference in the interest shown by village, sex, age, educational backgrounds or income levels of respondents ($p > 0.05$). Most respondents (95.2%) in the five villages were interested in providing different kinds of service to tourists. This did not differ among any of the variables above. However, most (50.6%) would like to sell food items when available to lodges and direct to

tourists. The different types of services that could be offered also differed between villages ($c^2 = 143.39$, $df = 16$, $p < 0.001$), sex ($c^2 = 17.33$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.01$) and age ($c^2 = 26.89$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 7), but not between educational backgrounds or income levels of respondents ($p > 0.05$).

It is interesting to note that only one person from the Wli area, where most tourists visited, was interested in tour guiding. In contrast, more respondents were interested in tour guiding in the two Gbledi villages.

Mechanism for cost and benefit sharing as perceived by local people

There was no consensus on how cost and benefits accruing from activities undertaken in the whole of AACA could be shared. However, most respondents (51.0%) believed that cost and

Table 5: Factors determining local peoples' interaction with tourists in AACA

Variable	B	S.E.	df	Sig.
Village	-	-	4	0.000***
Chebi	-3.50	0.68	1	0.000***
Ahor	-3.29	0.61	1	0.000***
Afegame	-4.19	0.84	1	0.000***
Agorviefe	-0.50	0.42	1	0.361
Gborgame	-	-	0	0
Sex				
Male	1.25	0.419	1	0.003**
Female	-	-	-	0
			3	0.649
Age				
(20-39)	-	-	1	0.465
(40-59)	0.49	0.68	1	0.231
(>60)	0.79	0.66	1	0.596
(<20)	0.37	0.70	-	0
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	2	0.543
Educational background				
Basic	-0.55	0.60	1	0.362
Secondary	-0.21	0.73	1	0.769
No formal	-	-	-	0
	-	-	2	0.207
Income level				
Average	-0.59	0.53	1	0.273
High	0.30	0.49	1	0.539
Low	-	-	-	0

Level of significance: ** = $P < 0.01$, *** = $P < 0.001$

Table 6: The kind of contact/interaction that exist between local people and tourists in the AACCA

Village	Sample size	Sell to tourists (%)	Converse with tourists (%)	Tour guiding (%)
Gborgame	15	6.7	40.0	53.3
Chebi	4	25.0	75.0	0.0
Ahor	4	50.0	50.0	0.0
Afegame	17	5.9	70.6	23.5
Agorviefe	31	12.9	58.1	29.0
Total	71	12.7	57.7	29.6

Table 7: The kind of tourist-related activity that local people were interested in becoming involved in AACCA

Variable	Sample size	Tour guiding (%)	Cultural performance (%)	Accommodation & food (%)	Sell local handicrafts (%)	Sell food items (%)
Village						
Gborgame	49	36.7	4.1	2.0	4.1	53.1
Chebi	50	30.0	12.0	42.0	4.0	12.0
Ahor	50	18.0	18.0	46.0	0.0	18.0
Afegame	50	2.0	4.0	6.0	8.0	80.0
Agorviefe	50	0.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	90.0
Sex						
Female	110	10.9	6.4	30.0	1.8	50.9
Male	139	22.3	9.4	12.2	5.8	50.4
Age						
(<20)	25	24.0	0.0	20.0	4.0	52.0
(20-39)	74	17.6	2.7	14.9	1.4	63.5
(40-59)	86	18.6	7.0	24.4	2.3	47.7
(>60)	62	12.9	19.4	21.0	8.1	38.7
Total		17.3	8.0	20.1	4.0	50.6

benefits should be shared according to size of land contributed by each village. Opinions held on this matter differed ($c^2 = 101.10$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.001$) between villages, but not between sexes, age, educational backgrounds and income levels of respondents ($p > 0.05$). The majority of people in the two Wli villages and Chebi wanted benefits to be shared according to land contributed by each village, while the majority from Gborgame and Ahor wanted the benefits to be shared equally among all villages, irrespective of the land contributed (Table 8).

DISCUSSION

Local peoples' perception of economic opportunities and benefits in tourism-related activities

There are essentially three goals for community involvement in tourism activities: rural development, conservation and industry development. However, the degree of interest in one or more of these perspectives differs from one stakeholder to another (Ashley and Roe, 1998). For the local residents, it means creation of jobs, enterprise and skill development. For rural de-

Table 8: Local peoples’ opinion on how potential benefits should be shared

Village	Gborgame (%)	Chebi (%)	Ahor (%)	Afegame (%)	Agorviefe (%)	Total
Sample Size	49	50	50	50	50	249
Shared equally among villages	44.9	28.0	76.0	4.0	8.0	32.1
Shared according to land contributed by each village	38.8	38.0	16.0	88.0	74.0	51.0
Shared amongst individuals whose land are involved	16.3	34.0	8.0	18.0	8.0	16.9

velopment agencies such as government agencies and NGOs, it is a strategy for diversification of rural economies and developing local capacity.

In the AACA, reasons given for host communities accepting tourism to their areas have been economic reasons, mainly in the form of employment and development of their areas, and the projection of the image of their area. The Local people are also of the opinion that development triggers off other economic activities, therefore, they should seek development of their area first and other benefits will follow, with possible injection of much needed money the local economy, thereby improving living conditions. Interestingly, nobody seemed to be aware of the potential ill effects of tourist activities in their area. With the recognition of the crucial role played by local people in the management of wildlife and habitat, conservationists now recognise that tourism is often a means by which tangible benefits for wildlife management can be realised and to create incentives for conservation (Ashley and Roe, 1998). Furthermore, increasing local participation ensures project effectiveness, increases the capacity of beneficiaries to take responsibility for project activities, and facilitates cost sharing through local contributions in one form or another. However, there are no models of participation in nature-based tourism that work everywhere (Owusu, 2001). Similarly, there are limits to the practical implementation of local participation in many nature-based tourism activities. However, it is important to note

that developing tourism in ways that are more appropriate for communities, takes considerable time and effort. This may include; extension inputs, participatory planning, and conflict-resolution procedures (Berger, 1996; Ashley and Roe 1998). Nevertheless, the more local people are made aware of what the potential rewards and pitfalls of tourism are, and the more they are involved in and benefit from its development, the greater the likelihood of them accepting tourism and committing to preserve the natural and cultural values upon which tourism is based (Robinson, 1992). It is also important that incentives and benefits accruing from tourism- or ecotourism- related projects are made to achieve the conservation objectives for which they were designed.

The results from the study show that the active involvement of local people in tourism activities is more likely to be concentrated in Gborgame and Agorviefe. These are the major entry points to the Mt. Afadjato and Wli Waterfalls within the Agumatsa Wildlife Sanctuary, respectively.

Thus, tourists interact more with people in these villages after arriving at these points. The dominance of the active male participation could also be attributed to fact that due to the terrain condition of the area only males most of the time volunteers to send guides to the mountains and much more involved in tour guiding. However the reason why there was a lower interest in guiding service at Wli-Agorviefe could probably be attributed to the presence of Wildlife Division (WD) staff at the site, who have been handling

tourist activities. Thus, local people might have thought that the presence of WD staff would not enable them to become involved in tour guiding. In contrast, their tourist activities at Gborgame are managed by a local management committee facilitated by an NGO.

It is clear from the survey results that people living in the two villages see tourists frequently by virtue of their location than do other villages. Unless other hidden attractions in the other villages are developed and added to the AACA product, it will be difficult for all the expectations of local people mentioned such as more sales of local produce, more interaction with visitors and more jobs be equally distributed in the villages. Thus, hindering the spread of both positive and negative impacts that may come with nature tourism in the area. This is confirmed by the reason given by those few respondents who thought they could not make money from tourism activities that tourists did not stop over in their villages. Therefore, it would be difficult to have any form of interaction with them, let alone make money from their activities. Consequently, the promotion of existing economic activities in low tourist areas which apart from helping to diversify activities may also help distribute income across the villages (Owusu, 2001).

Cost and benefit sharing

Cost and benefit sharing in conservation-related activities have been debated in various circles in the conservation world. However, there has not been any single model that works everywhere, due to the specific nature of sites involved in conservation programmes (Owusu 2001). It can be simple in some places, but mostly complex due to the varied nature of factors of production that go into such programmes. There are essentially three things to consider when it comes to benefit sharing: who will get the benefits, how long will the benefit be distributed, and, for how long will it be received. A mixture of individual and community benefits has been suggested to be the best (Brandon 1993). However, in prac-

tice, it has been observed that the limited financial benefits accruing are mostly captured by small elite within communities (Ashley and Roe, 1998). Furthermore, the local elite and particularly men often dominate community-based tourism programmes and can easily monopolise the benefits of tourism (Schenyvens, 1998; Ashley and Roe, 1998). More so, benefits are often distributed very unevenly, usually to individuals that pose negligible threat to the resource under protection. Ironically those who will receive nothing will still share in the cost of tourism, such as inflated prices of land, food and other goods and services (McLaren, 1998). Thus, Wells and Brandon (1993) observe that simply allocating profits to local people may not lead to the desired alleviation of poverty if they are not widely distributed. Land as a major factor has been suggested at some point as an index of cost to people. Therefore, the bigger the portion of one's land that is taken by conservation activities, the bigger that person's share of the benefit. However, this has been opposed by some proponents of conservation because of the complex nature of land tenure systems. At the AACA the situation is even more complex making it more difficult when it comes to benefit sharing. It is clear from this study that local people will want benefits to be shared according to the land contributed to the conservation project by individual villages. Four reasons can be given for the different opinions by respondents. Firstly, people living in the Wli area have the Wli Waterfall that attracts most tourists to the AACA. Therefore, there is the tendency for people living in the two villages to consider their portion of the entire AACA as the most important, and therefore should derive the maximum benefits and a larger share of benefits accruing. Secondly, only a few people within the Wli traditional area own the lands on the Wli, portion of the AACA, which means if benefits are to be shared to individuals whose land are affected by the conservation initiative, the majority will be left out. This probably explains why fewer people from Wli, especially Agorvieve where most of the landlords are

based, will want benefits to go to individuals. Thirdly, the higher number of people at Chebi wanting benefits to go to individuals can probably be explained by the fact that landlords at Chebi own most of the lands between Ahor and Chebi and some of the land on the Mount Afadjato itself. Therefore, people living in the village see their contribution of land to conservation as a great loss and therefore would need compensation in the form of maximum benefit.

Lastly, for people living in Ahor there is not much to lose in terms of land. This is because, only one family owns a small portion of the range and people in this village are much more likely to agree to any cost and benefit sharing mechanism put in place with an obvious choice of sharing equally among all villages. However, due to the complex nature of the situation a more reasonable approach would be for local people to recognise the fact that none of the individual villages can live in isolation and agree that irrespective of where tourists go to visit along the range, profits accruing are shared equally among villages involved in the project. In the same way, the costs incurred should be equally distributed.

Ecotourism as tool for conservation

Much as conservation related projects seek to ensure that local people are not at a disadvantage by providing them with incentives in diverse ways, there is also the concern among proponents of conservation as to how local people will appreciate that economic opportunities created are trade-offs for the efforts to conserve their natural areas. The bottom line of many nature-based tourism projects is to ensure that the income, employment and other benefits will help sustain the resource base (Brandon, 1993). However, a common problem identified by Brandon and Wells (1992) is that the linkage between nature tourism and for that matter ecotourism benefits and conservation objectives are indirect. Indeed, they conclude that when benefits are low and/or linkages are weak, ecotourism does not lead to any conservation action. Many ways have been suggested to strengthen the linkage

between benefits and conservation objectives to create positive incentives. These include: the benefits must be considered significant to a large portion of the community where they are to serve as incentive (Brandon, 1993); economic activities must have direct relations with the resource base such as bee-keeping; snail-breeding and so on; the community must have the capacity to absorb the incentive scheme (McNeely, 1988; Brandon, 1993); benefits must be flexible over time so as to maintain the interest of different groups within the community; and finally, the relationship between conserving the resource base and the receipt of benefits must be made clear to the community (Brandon, 1993).

Evidence gathered from this study however, suggests that people living in the AACA are more concerned with how much ecotourism will bring to the local economy in terms of income, which will improve upon the living conditions of the people. Therefore, there is a very high expectation of the benefits that might be derived from the conservation and ecotourism initiative in the area. From the foregone discussions it is important that local people are made very much aware of the relationship between conserving the resource base and the receipt of benefits (Brandon, 1993). For example, local people will need to forgo some of the direct benefits they currently derive from the forest ecosystem of the AACA without necessarily being disempowered. This, however, will depend on how local people view the costs and benefits associated with conservation and ecotourism in terms of biodiversity conservation, socio-economic, well-being of the people and local developments (summarised in Table 9).

This range of potential opportunities and costs suggest that local people are more likely to benefit from the conservation and ecotourism initiative if they are prepared to bear the costs, which appear less than the opportunities and advantages to be derived from the initiative. Such costs may include less use of bushmeat (Owusu

Table 9: Summary of the opportunities that exist in terms of ecotourism development and the associated costs at the AACA

Values	Opportunities/potential benefits	Costs
Biodiversity conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced conservation of natural resources through integrated management of different parts of the entire range as against an ad hoc approach by individual traditional areas Developed local capacity for conservation Increased drawing power of natural resources as an attraction Protection of cultural values of local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution of lands to form a community nature reserve Limited access to natural resource utilisation
Socio economic well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job creation for local people Micro-enterprise development Sustainable utilisation of natural resources Increased awareness of local environmental values. Improved social relations between villages Creation of recreational facilities which can also be used by local people Diversification of local economy by improving linkages to other traditional economic activities such as agriculture which may be insufficient and sporadic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal sharing of benefits as opposed to piecemeal approach High expectations Disruption of local culture Threats to long-term security due to changes in life-style of local people Need for social cohesion and improved local relationships
Local development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulation of infrastructure development Facilitation of institutional development Enhancement of mage building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict with other activities such as agriculture

et al., 2006), regulation of the extraction of NTFPs and so on.

It has been observed that benefits from protected areas come in the form of recreation, watershed protection, and enhancement of ecological process, biodiversity conservation, education and research, non-consumptive benefits such as historical and cultural, and future values (Dixon and Sherman, 1990). However, these benefits are not all obvious, nor are they divided in a manner proportional to costs borne by local people (Barrow *et al.*, 1995). Although many texts on tourism planning allow some space for discussion on the relationship between tourism and community development, usually expressing the desire that tourism should benefit the host community, they say very little on how to actually

mobilise local involvement (Din, 1997). As a result, in reality very little tourism revenue accrues to local people from protected areas (Wells and Brandon, 1993; Goodwin *et al.*, 1998; Honey, 1999). However, the central issues facing most developing countries, and for that matter local communities that view ecotourism as a development tool is that of revenue capture (Honey, 1999). This can be improved considerably by the tourism industry through engaging with local communities and the local industry to enhance the quality, diversity and sustainability of the tourist experience (Goodwin *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore, opportunities from tourism are more easily realised where new activities complement existing livelihoods or provide income to outbid them altogether (Goodwin *et al.*,

1998). However, whether local people will accept conservation initiatives such as ecotourism that seek to improve local livelihood conditions will depend on the clear understanding of benefits and the costs that go with it. Hence whether benefits from ecotourism can be used to achieve its objectives of conservation will depend on the strategies that will be adopted for (i) involving local communities in all aspects of management, (ii) using the revenues accruing to finance ecotourism development and traditional conservation management (iii) increasing ecotourism's contribution to the economic development of communities near destinations; and, (iv) ensuring that the benefits to be derived outweigh the costs to local communities

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that people living in the five villages of AACAs are keen to be part of any tourist-related activities that are initiated in their area. It is also clear that like many other community-based tourism initiatives local people expect that whatever activities they are involved in will lead to improving their living conditions. However, there are barriers that need to be cleared to make achieving these objectives possible and this can be surmounted if people living in the AACAs will take responsibility of and play active role at all levels. Furthermore any scheme of participation that is put in place should ensure that it is linked to community awareness, community unity and power or control relationships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author wishes to thank the staff members of the Ghana Wildlife Society, particularly, the forest guards at the Mt Afadjato Community Nature Reserve and Mr. Reuben Ottoo, the Assistant Project Manager for their support during data collection. The co-operation of local community members of the Gbledi Traditional Area is greatly appreciated. Funding for this study was partially supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy under the Mt. Afadjato-Agumatsa Community Conservation Project.

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